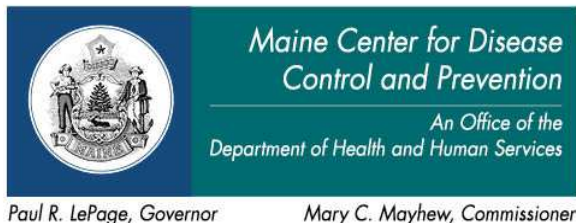


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*Dr. Sheila Pinette, Osteopathic physician
Director, Maine CDC*

Public Health Update

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Updates

Flu

Flu is widespread in Maine with lab-confirmed cases reported in all counties. Maine CDC has followed up on 33 flu outbreaks as of Tuesday, January 6. Maine CDC still strongly recommends a flu vaccine if you haven't already been vaccinated.

Although the vaccine is not a good match to the strain of flu circulating the most in the U.S., getting vaccinated may offer some level of protection from symptoms. The vaccine also provides protection against three other strains of flu.

Clinical recommendations and guidelines are available in health alerts issued Dec. 5 (available at <http://go.usa.gov/F4Vd>) and Jan. 6 (available at <http://go.usa.gov/t23C>).

Weekly updates on flu cases are available online:

- for Maine: <http://go.usa.gov/NoK>
- for the US: <http://go.usa.gov/ITB>
- for the world: <http://go.usa.gov/ITK>

Maine CDC reminds everyone to take everyday preventive measures against the flu:

- Wash your hands frequently;
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or shoulder;
- Stay home when you feel sick;
- Get vaccinated. To find a flu vaccine in your area, search <http://flushot.healthmap.org/> or contact your health care provider or pharmacy.

If you have the flu:

- Stay home if you are sick, until you are fever-free for a full 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicine.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or into a tissue. Throw the tissue away.

- Although most people can stay home to recover without seeing a health care provider, **it is possible for healthy people to develop severe illness from the flu.** **Anyone with the flu should seek medical attention for:**
 - Dehydration
 - Trouble breathing
 - Getting better, then suddenly getting a lot worse
 - Any major change in condition

For more information, go to www.maine flu.gov or <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Birth Defects

January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month. The theme this year is "Making Healthy Choices to Prevent Birth Defects: Make a PACT for Prevention," encouraging all pregnant women and those who may become pregnant to:

- Plan ahead
- Avoid harmful substances
- Choose a healthy lifestyle
- Talk to your healthcare provider

For more information, visit <http://go.usa.gov/tYz9>

Pertussis (whooping cough)

Cases of pertussis (whooping cough) continue to be reported statewide, with an increased number of cases reported from Androscoggin, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Waldo counties in the last month.

As of Jan. 5, providers reported a total of 536 pertussis cases from all 16 counties in 2014. The majority of the cases are in school aged children and more than a third of the cases were reported since school started in the fall.

Maine CDC encourages providers continue to test and treat patients. DTaP vaccine is recommended for all infants and children. Tdap vaccine is recommended for all preteens, teens, and adults.

For more guidance and information, visit <http://go.usa.gov/dCO>

Tick-borne diseases

Providers should be aware of the risk and prevalence of tick-borne diseases and consider them in their diagnoses.

Case counts for tick-borne diseases reported in Maine for 2014 as of Jan. 5 include:

- 1,334 cases of Lyme disease*, compared to 1,375 for 2013
- 190 cases of Anaplasmosis, compared to 94 for 2013
- 42 cases of Babesiosis, compared to 36 cases for 2013

Recommendations for Providers:

- Consider tick-borne illnesses in your differential
- Submit samples for testing
- Treat patients appropriately - recommendations for treatment are available at http://www.idsociety.org/uploadedfiles/idsa/guidelines-patient_care/pdf_library/lyme%20disease.pdf
- Report cases. All tick-borne illnesses are reportable in Maine, including the erythema migrans rash, which is confirmatory. To ease the reporting burden of EM rashes, a registry report option is available in the Health Alert from Aug. 7 available at <http://go.usa.gov/N7yw>. All cases should be reported by phone to 1-800-821-5821 or by fax to 1-800-293-7534.

For more information:

- More information on tick-borne diseases is available at <http://go.usa.gov/kGYV>
- For Lyme disease testing and treatment information, see the health alert at <http://go.usa.gov/kscC>
- Lyme disease data are available on Maine CDC's website at <http://go.usa.gov/kGYx>
- A Physician's Reference Guide is available and describes the most common tickborne diseases in Maine. This guide can be found on our website at: <http://go.usa.gov/kGrw>
- To order Lyme educational materials: <http://go.usa.gov/kGYh>

* Lyme disease reporting is a passive system, so it may take up to a couple of months for cases to be counted.

Ebola

There have been no reported cases of Ebola in Maine.

The current outbreak of Ebola in West Africa is the largest outbreak of Ebola ever documented and the first recorded in West Africa. For ongoing information about the outbreak in West Africa, go to <http://go.usa.gov/Eu9B>

US CDC advises US residents to avoid all non-essential travel to the West African countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. All travelers entering the US from Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea in the last 21 days will arrive through one of five major US airports: JFK in New York; Newark in New Jersey; Atlanta, Georgia; Dulles in Washington, DC; and O'Hare in Chicago. For more details, see: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

For more information, visit www.maine.gov/ebola

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Follow Maine CDC's Social Media Updates:

- Facebook (www.facebook.com/MaineCDC)
- Twitter (<http://twitter.com/MEPublicHealth>)
- Blog (<http://mainepublichealth.blogspot.com>)

For clinical consultation and outbreak management guidance, call Maine CDC's toll-free 24-hour phone line: 1-800-821-5821

For questions and potential exposure to poison, call the Poison Center's 24-hour phone line: 1-800-222-1222

For road conditions, closures, and detours: call 5-1-1 or visit www.511maine.gov.

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Maine CDC | SHS 11, 286 Water Street | Augusta | ME | 04330